

Reconstruction.

Our attention has been called to the fifth article of the Constitution of the United States, which declares that "the Congress, whenever two-thirds of both houses shall deem it necessary, shall propose amendments to this Constitution, or on the application of the Legislatures of two-thirds of the several States, shall call a convention for proposing amendments."

The *Phoenix*, nearly six months ago, and while the propositions now pending before the States were pending before Congress, took the position that the conflict between the President and Congress, as to the propriety of the latter department of the Government proposing amendments to the Constitution, while a portion of the States were unrepresented in Congress, and the feeling which such a course on the part of Congress would inevitably arouse, made it expedient to leave the proposed amendments to the actions of State Legislatures, to calling a general convention of all the States.

Every day's observation since that time has tended to confirm the wisdom of this view, and we are pleased to see that prominent men and journals in various sections of the country agree to the proposition. From the *Nashville Union and American*, we have got some good hints in relation to this matter. It is now obvious that three-fourths of the States do not intend to ratify the Congressional scheme of amendment. Apart from intrinsic objections to it, they conceive, and in this the President concurs, that the Constitution confers no power on any legislative body, less than a Congress composed of representatives from all the States, to propose amendments under the article above quoted—in other words, that the people called to ratify should have a voice in considering the necessity of a proposition to amend—that all the States are entitled to as much participation in the preliminary work of forming amendments as they are in a voice in their ratification or rejection.

No mind devoid of prejudice, and disposed to preserve the form presented for this important step, can refuse to admit the justice of this position. The thirty-ninth Congress ought not to have assumed the prerogative in the first sentence of the fifth article, and it would act wisely, and in the interest of an early and satisfactory adjustment of outstanding questions, if it should promptly withdraw its "amendment" at its meeting in December. If, then, two-thirds of the Legislatures of the States should make the call for a Constitutional Convention, and Congress would, in a spirit of fairness, provide for its assembling, we have little doubt that every question vital to the restoration of the Union would be considered and delivered by such a body as to command the unanimous approval of all the States. It was unquestionably an error, fatal to the early settlement of the details of questions decided by the civil war, in Congress, representing a portion of the nation only, to attempt to dictate the organic law. Repealable statutes and fundamental laws are different things, and the wise men who made the latter comprehended the distinction, and clearly set forth the truth in the fifth article, whose every sentence and word contemplates that the work of amendment to the Constitution should be in its inception, progress and consummation, the act of all the people, either in their primary capacity, or through accredited representatives. We advocate, therefore, the movement of State Legislatures for a call by Congress of a Constitutional Convention. This will relieve both the President and Congress, and limit the important questions at issue to the people, where, unless we have forgotten the very alphabet of republicanism, they properly belong.

A despatch from London, the 15th, says the Confederate bond-holders are about to bring their case under the notice of the British Government, as a set-off against the Alabama claims of the United States.

The number of emigrants landed at New York, last week, was 6,113, making a total of 212,752 landed since January 1, against 168,338 arrived in the corresponding period of 1865.

The Political Situation.

In an article on the political and financial situation, the *Baltimore Sun*, of a late date, notes the fact that the result of the late elections places Maryland and Delaware with Kentucky in the list of States opposed to the constitutional amendment. These, with the excluded States, will make thirteen certainly and firmly opposed to its adoption. Three-fourths of all the States being required to carry this amendment into effect, its defeat is therefore certain. Under these circumstances, the *Sun* says:

"Should Congress persist in its purpose to keep the States unrepresented, we shall have that unaccountable predicament upon us of a constitution practically annulled by an act of Congress, and a new feature grafted upon the fundamental law itself, and when it has been explicitly repudiated according to the provisions of that law. It is unquestionable that the present Congress will adhere to its determination, and it is equally unquestionable that the States will adhere to their rejection of the amendment. What then? It is clear that the union of these States must remain disaffected for at least another year. Assuming that no aggressive legislation is attempted during the approaching session, still it cannot pass over without a great deal of angry discussion and heart-burning dissension. The natural, the inevitable consequences of such a state of things must be to stagnate trade, to retard the development of the industry of the country, and to add to its financial embarrassments by fastening upon us for an indefinite period a depreciated paper currency. To what extent the depreciation may extend, no one can calculate.

"Could the attention of legislators be directed from the angry contest over the points of irreconcilable variance to some measures of practical relief for the industry of the country, their labors might not be in vain. But it is greatly to be feared that a baffled majority will be more intent upon punitive than remedial measures, and that no measures of practical relief to the industry and commerce of the country will mitigate the countless evils of unrepresented union."

The *New York World*, of Monday, says:

There is a story from Washington that Chief Justice Chase and the President have had a long talk, the object of the Chief Justice being to make the President turn a somersault and jump down his own throat. Physically, that is a difficult performance, but morally and mentally, we have known politicians by trade to perform the feat once, twice, and even three times. We have known a man turn Roman Catholic from Protestant, and then turn Protestant again. Some of the great popular favorites are those whose facility in these gymnastics is the most remarkable. We used to dread Brownlow's coming North, for he was such a rabid pro-slavery black-guard that men instinctively felt everything he favored wrong. Since he is in the Torch-and-Turpentine line, and is as much a black-guard as before, with the addition of hypocrisy to blackguardism, he is a sort of St. Peter in the political church of which Butler is the St. Paul.

The simple question in issue now is, shall the Government of the United States be a limited or an unlimited Government? If a man says it ought to be an unlimited Government, very well, let him range himself with the Republican-Union-Radical party, and help bring about that consummation; if he says it ought to be a limited Government, let him stand with the Democratic party, and oppose every attempt, no matter under what pretext—to destroy that principle. It is not given to wisdom or honesty to succeed at first; in fact, they seem crushed out for years, sometimes. A man cannot always make a successful battle, but one thing he always can do—not help defeat himself.

If the Democracy of the West is of such a feeble constitution that it cannot stand out in the cold for twenty years, it differs from the Democracy of New York. From the leaders of our forces, purchases have been made; but the rank and file are Democrats, not because there is something to be made by a political faith, but because they believe in it. They believe in it because it means liberty; the least possible amount of government by one citizen over another citizen, consistent with the safety of all. They do not believe that, if a majority want to go to church, that a minority should go too; they do not believe that if a majority only want to drink water, that a minority must be cut off from beer. They do not believe in taking one dollar from A, who does not manufacture, and giving it to B, who does. They do not believe in letting a few men make promises to pay money for the great masses, who will have to settle in actual value for debts contracted under the reign of paper. The Democrats generally do not recognize any difference between personal dishonesty and political dishonesty. Nor do the Democrats understand that "rights" mean any less than they did after magna charta and the declaration of independence. They recognize the power of superior strength, but they

have not yet come to admit that there are no such things as honor, honesty and justice; that there is really strength, and strength only.

The November Meteors.

Professor Loomis, of Yale College, under date of November 16, has sent to the *New York Post* the following account of his meteoric observations:

On Monday night, November 12, a company of observers at this place counted 636 shooting stars in five hours and twenty minutes, which is about four times the average number visible for the same period throughout the year. On Tuesday night, November 13, another company counted 881 shooting stars in five hours, which is five times the average number. On Wednesday night, the sky was overcast, so that no observation could be made. We conclude, then, that the number of shooting stars visible about the 13th was very remarkable; nevertheless, this display is not to be compared with November 13, 1833, in which the number of meteors was variously estimated at from 10,000 to 30,000 per hour.

The grand display, therefore, which it was supposed might possibly occur this year, has not been witnessed in the United States, and probably not in Europe, or it would have been announced to us by telegraph. It may have been witnessed in Asia or the Pacific Ocean; but if such had been the case, it seems probable that the number visible in the United States would have been greater than it was. The telegram in this morning's *Herald*, purporting to have come from Greenwich, is evidently spurious. It is, therefore, probable that there has not been witnessed this year, in any part of the world, a display of meteors at all, to be compared with the grand display of 1833.

As an unusual interest on this subject appears to have been excited, some of your readers may wish an answer to the question: What are shooting stars? and how do you account for their periodical display in unusual numbers? Shooting stars may, without much impropriety, be called little comets. Each meteor is a small body, generally of very little density, revolving about the sun in an elliptic orbit, and governed by the same laws as the larger planets—Jupiter and Saturn. The average number of these bodies which encounter the earth every day is several millions, and still there is no perceptible decrease from year to year. The total number of these bodies, therefore, belonging to our solar system, must be reckoned by millions of millions.

The earth, in its motion about the sun, with a velocity of nineteen miles per second, is continually encountering more or less of these bodies, and they plunge into our atmosphere with velocities varying from ten to forty miles per second, by which means heat is developed sufficient to ignite them, and they are entirely consumed, generally in a single second, and at an elevation of about fifty miles above the earth's surface. Occasionally we encounter bodies of greater density, which cannot be so readily consumed, and they reach the earth's surface sometimes entire, and at other times in a fragmentary condition. Samples of such meteors are to be found in all mineralogical collections of this country and Europe.

The periodical display of shooting stars in unusual numbers indicates that they are not distributed uniformly throughout the solar system, but are collected in vast numbers in certain regions, while in other regions they are comparatively few. Shooting stars are annually seen in great numbers on the 10th of August, and since each meteor is moving in its orbit with great velocity, while every year we find large numbers of them near the same point of the earth's orbit, we conclude that they are arranged in a ring or zone intersecting the earth's orbit at a point which the earth passes on the 10th of August.

In order to explain the recurrence of an unusual number of shooting stars year after year, about the 13th of November, we suppose that there is another ring of these minute bodies, somewhat inclined to the ecliptic. Throughout the different portions of this ring, the meteors are distributed in very unequal numbers; but there is one portion where the number is immensely great, and it is this portion which the earth encounters at intervals of about thirty-three years. According to Professor H. A. Newton, the reason that this display returns only once in thirty-three years is the following: Each meteor of the November group moves in an orbit which is nearly circular, with a mean distance from the sun either a little less or a little greater than that of the earth, and a period about eleven days less or greater than one year. The earth encountered the densest portion of this group in November, 1833; but the next year this portion passed eleven days before or after the earth returned to that point of its orbit; the following year the difference amounted to twenty-two days; so that at the end of about thirty-three years it must gain or lose one entire revolution, and return nearly to the position where it must encounter the earth. If we receive no accounts of an unusual display of meteors this week in any part of the world, we shall look with considerable confidence for such a display on November 14, 1867.

New Plan of the Herald.

The *New York Herald*, of Tuesday, has a new plan for the reconstruction of the Union. The pith of the scheme is in the two following concluding paragraphs of its article:

We would submit to the Congress, which is to re-assemble in Washington on the first Monday in December, a new constitutional amendment, or a modification of that before the States, so as to embrace, not the cheating proposition of impartial suffrage, but universal suffrage and a universal amnesty, as the basis of Southern restoration. The universal suffrage we mean is the admission to the ballot-box of all males of all races and colors, of twenty-one years of age, except criminals and lunatics and "Indians not taxed;" and the amnesty we mean is one which will reach from the rebel bush-whacker to Jeff. Davis and his Cabinet, beginning with the release of Davis. We would further propose the enforcement of this settlement upon the rebellious South, as President Johnson enforced the amendment abolishing slavery. To this end, an Act of Congress, requiring the President to place an army of 100,000 or 150,000 men under General Grant, for the purpose of hurrying up the good work in the excluded States, would be a good thing. Something of this sort is required to convince those States and their people that an unsuccessful rebellion brings its pains and penalties, and that it is the victor, and not the vanquished, that dictates the treaty of peace.

President Johnson's efforts at restoration have turned out to be "love's labor lost." Let the rightful authority of Congress, then, be interposed, and in a manner which will admit of no more trifling and no more delay. Let this new plan be placed in the hands of Gen. Grant, for its enforcement, and the thing will soon be done. Peace, restoration and harmony will speedily follow; for while the universal amnesty will throw the veil over the offenses and offenders of the rebellion, universal suffrage, blacks and all, will hold the recovered States firmly in the Union and with the cause of the Union. Moreover, by this plan, there will be the additional positive advantage to the South of a gain of some twenty odd members of Congress over the plan of negro exclusion from the suffrage. The authority and the power are in the hands of Congress, and this is our plan as matters now stand, to a short, comprehensive, complete and speedy settlement.

The Crops for 1866.

The *New York Tribune* has an editorial summing up of the crops for the season, from which we quote: As we feared, the early frosts in the North-west, reaching Southward to embrace one-third of the State of Illinois, did considerable damage to the corn crop. Accounts from the section thus affected report much soft and immature corn. Throughout the country, however, the crop is above the average annual yield, though not so very large as it was expected it would be three months ago.

The potato crop is large, but unfortunately the tubers are infected with rot, so much so that dealers refuse to buy in large quantities and prices are consequently low.

The apple crop is fair in the Western States, and the fruit is of excellent quality. In the middle and Eastern States the yield is light.

The hog crop has been over-estimated. It will not, as has been supposed, be unusually large, but will barely exceed the average harvest.

Grapes are in fair supply, but of inferior quality. In many localities, by reason of an early frost, the fruit failed to ripen, and hence is dry and insipid. Good grapes are very scarce, and in great demand.

Though we are without definite information on the yield of the bean crop, the high prices, active inquiry, and small supply, indicate a short crop.

The *New York market* has never, hitherto, been so completely overrun with cattle, hogs, and sheep. They are poured in upon us from all parts of the West, where the supply seems to be inexhaustible; and both growers and dealers are anxious to sell at present prices, which are gradually settling to a lower basis.

Turkeys were never before so abundant throughout the country. Small poultry is also in full supply. Present high prices, therefore, are purely speculative, and must eventually break down. The quantity of butter made this fall is truly enormous, and a vast supply is held by both dairymen and dealers, who have overhauled themselves and will now be compelled to reduce their stocks at lower figures, as the supply is quite too large to maintain present prices. The accumulation of cheese even exceeds that of butter, and must, for the same causes, experience a decline in price. Wool is in good supply. The shearing was larger than usual, and of fair quality. The army demand having ceased, the market is inactive and has already experienced a marked decline.

A party from the Dorn Mines, at Abbeville, S. C., represent discoveries of gold there which promise large results. An old battery, after eighteen hours' work, gave nine ounces and seventeen pennyweights of gold from less than a ton and a quarter of reduced ore.

The Penitentiary System.

The wisdom of establishing the penitentiary system in this State is shown by the following notice of the report of the superintendent of the Georgia institution, by a correspondent of the *Atlanta Intelligencer*:

"By the annual report of Mr. W. C. Anderson, the principal keeper of the penitentiary, it appears that, in the penitentiary proper, there were, on the 30th of September, 91 convicts, and belonging to the chain-gang 114, making a total of 205. The report exhibits a statement of a very thorough repair and renovation of a portion of the buildings and premises. Among the improvements mentioned is the introduction of a corn mill, operated by steam power, capable of grinding 100 bushels of corn per day, the toll being expected to bread the whole institution. Mr. Anderson expresses the decided opinion that the penitentiary may be made, in its present location, self-sustaining, if not a source of revenue to the State. The report of the book-keeper shows an excess of assets over indebtedness to the amount of \$13,513."

We notice, in this connection, that Gov. Worth, of North Carolina, in his message to the Legislature, strongly recommends the establishment of a penitentiary in that State.

VERY GOOD.—The *New Orleans Picayune* has the following capital sarcastic remarks on the absurd stories published by the radical sheets of New York:

Armed organizations of ex-rebel soldiers are drilling nightly on Canal street. It is reported that Jeff. Davis has escaped from prison and is in command. No Union man dare show himself on the streets after sunset. A violent rebel threatened to pull down the custom house, and, but for the timely arrival of the 18th corps, would have executed his threat. Mayor Monroe hung himself and then killed his family, in order, as he afterwards stated, to avoid the just indignation of the Union citizens. The commanding general takes his meals regularly in spite of rebel threats. It is stated, on good authority, that the Mississippi River is undermined. Several rebel cruisers came up the river yesterday to see whether the reported surrender of the Confederate authorities was correct. Being told that it was, they cursed the United States Government, and, after taking coal and provisions, went down to Barataria. Unfortunately the war vessels in port were unable to get up steam in time to overhaul them. People here do not hesitate to speak openly in favor of President Johnson and the constitution. One man went so far as to say, "D—n the radicals." The ex-rebels are in a destitute condition, and in some portions of the city are eating their children.

Which the *New York Express* continued as follows:

We may add, that an intelligent gentleman, who has had excellent opportunities for extended observation, says that several school marm from Massachusetts were roasted alive on the Sea Islands, one day last week, and that the rebels in the interior were smashing up the Freedmen's Bureau for firewood—the freedmen themselves having all been previously poisoned by New England rum.

THE POPE.—The *New York Times*, of Tuesday, has the following paragraph:

We have Florence dates of yesterday, which announce the issue of a circular by the Italian Government. In that circular, Baron Ricasoli intimates that it is not the purpose of the King's ministers to make any immediate movement against Rome. They are to content themselves, for the present, with watching the course of events. It is just possible that they see in the Papal Allocation an indistinct sort of purpose on the part of the sovereign of Rome to make a kind of voluntary abdication. In one passage of that solemn document, his Holiness says he may, in certain contingencies, remove to some place where he can better exercise his apostolic mission. That would be one way of solving the difficulty. Another, and perhaps a more natural way, would be for him to resign the care of his temporal estates to the sovereign of Italy, and continue to exercise his spiritual functions where he is.

We greatly regret that we are obliged, as a matter of public duty, to transfer to our columns the report which the *New York* correspondent of the *Boston Commonwealth* makes of the conduct of Horace Greeley, on the occasion of Butler's reception in City Hall Park.

At last the General (Wallbridge) was anxious to see if the hyenas would listen to Horace Greeley. At this time, an enthusiastic Republican kept firing a healthy cannon, that scared the veteran Greeley's nerves. Pressing forward to Gen. Wallbridge, (the Chairman,) Greeley, in a nervous trepidation, jerked out, "If you don't stop that G—d—d cannon, I'll leave the stand. I can't speak with that d—d thing; it will drown my voice."

There are 320 new brick stores going up in Atlanta.

Local Items.

The *Phoenix* office is on Main street, a few doors above Taylor (or Camden) street.

We are indebted to Peter B. Glass, Esq., for copies of late *New York* papers; also, *Le Bon Ton*, for December. Mr. G. receives these publications regularly.

If any one wishes good fruit—apples, lemons, chestnuts, coco-nuts, &c.—they will do well to read the advertisement of the Messrs. Schulze, and heed the injunction.

SHAVING.—Not your note, but your face. If you want anything in the "barberizing" line done, call on John Mills, at Nickerson's Hotel. He will fix you off in fine style.

FOR HISTORY.—AN HEIR-LOOM.—Preserve the record of the destruction of Columbia, written by one of South Carolina's historians, who was present during the whole sack and destruction of our city. It is the most authentic account published.

OUR NEW SIGNS.—To the skill and ingenuity of our old friend, Giles G. Newton, Esq., is the *Phoenix* indebted for the very tasty signs which, in gilt letters, inform the passer-by where the bird is to be found. long may he live to follow his vocation.

LUNCH THIS DAY.—Who can say that we don't have good things in "Chimneyville"? Take a look at the announcements of lunch from several of our restaurant keepers. Pollock has oyster soup, etc.; McGuinnis venison steaks; and Trevel & Beraghi wild turkey. Hurrah for the return of the era of good eating!

NEW ADVERTISEMENTS.—Attention is called to the following advertisements, which are published this morning for the first time:

Address before Clariosophic Society.
Pollock House—Oyster Soup, &c.
Charles Hamberg—\$500 Reward.
Good Fruit at Schulze's.
Fisher & Heintz—Clean Soap, &c.
Trevel & Beraghi—Turkey for Lunch.
Levin & Peixotto—Variety Sale, &c.
D. McGuinnis—Venison Steak for Lunch.
P. Cantwell—Bacon Strips, &c.
Apply to E. Stenhouse—Emp't Wanted.
Gov. Orr—Proclamation.

Masonry.

We take the following account of the great masonic demonstration in Baltimore, on the occasion of laying the corner-stone of the masonic temple, in that city, from our exchanges, and regret that we have not room for the full proceedings:

The ceremony of laying the corner-stone of the new masonic temple in Baltimore, designed to exceed, in dimensions and elegance, any other similar structure in this country, was consummated Tuesday, with great splendor and eclat. The interest manifested in the occasion had extended largely beyond the limits of the masonic fraternity, and the arrival of delegations of the order from distant cities and towns, to take part in the ceremonies, and their reception by organizations there, showed the degree of importance attached to it beyond the limits of the city. Early in the morning, the principal streets were lively with the gathering of the populace, male and female, to witness the promised pageant, as well as the proceedings to take place on the site of the proposed temple. The high respect entertained for the masonic order, and the character of its brotherhood, its beneficent objects, the splendor of its emblematic insignia and forms, all conspired to excite the interest of the community generally in regard to the events of the occasion.

Organizations of the order had arrived during the previous evening and night from Richmond, Petersburg and other points in Virginia, as well as from Philadelphia, Harrisburg and other Northern cities, and the morning train from Washington came in filled with passengers, as did also those of the Northern Central Railway, bringing other delegations and persons desirous of visiting the pageant. The President of the United States reached the city in a special train, about 9 o'clock, and was met at the Camden Station by Gov. Swann and staff.

The various bodies of Masons met at 9½ o'clock; the subordinate lodges at the Maryland Institute; the Chapters of Royal Arch Masons at the Masonic Hall, St. Paul street; the Commanderies of Knights Templar at the Holliday Street Theatre, and the Grand Lodges at Concordia Hall. Punctuality was manifested in all the movements, and at the appointed time the different bodies to form the general procession were conducted to their proper positions in line by the assistant marshals detailed for the purpose. The members of the masonic fraternity appeared in full black suits, high black hats and white gloves, with the appropriate regalia and emblems. The Knights Templar wore their rich black uniforms, showy belts and highly burnished swords, many of them decorated with costly jewels, with chapeaus and white flowing feathers, and, on the whole, made a most magnificent appearance.

The streets, in the meantime, became densely crowded in quarters where the coming pageant was to appear.

A celebrated French preacher, in a sermon upon the duty of wives, said: "I see, in this congregation, a woman who has been guilty of the sin of disobedience to her husband, and in order to point her out, I will fling my breviary at her head." He lifted his book, and every female head instantly ducked.